DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 303 939 EC 212 135

AUTHOR Ports, Kim; Mills, Carol J.
TITLE Curriculum Guide: The Basics of Writing.
INSTITUTION Johns Hopkins Univ., Baltimore, MD. Center for the Advancement of Academically Talented Youth.
PUB DATE 88
NOTE 88p.
AVAILABLE FROM Johns Hopkins University, Advising and Advocacy Services, Charles and 34th St., Baltimore, MD 21218.
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Cognitive Processes; Creative Writing; *Curriculum Design; Descriptive Writing; Elementary Education; Expository Writing; *Gifted; Narration; *Skill Development; Teaching Methods; *Writing (Composition); Writing Exercises; *Writing Instruction

ABSTRACT

This curriculum guide is designed to aid in the planning and execution of a writing course for verbally gifted elementary school students. The course is designed for students ranging in age from 8-11 years whose verbal reasoning skills are at least 3 years above grade level. The course instructs students in the fundamentals of communication through descriptive, narrative, and expository writing. The emphasis is on thinking and writing as an interrelated process which involves both skill and conceptual development. Students practice standard grammar, mechanical skills, and sentence, paragraph, and essay structure and development. Students are also challenged to expand their ability to think creatively and logically, and to begin to develop their own original voice and style. Classtime is comprised of discussions of student and professional essays, skill exercises, short creative writing assignments, and thinking games. Students write personal, nonfiction compositions and prepare for classwork at home. Writing workshops are designed to develop students' critical reading and writing skills, by having the class actively discuss and critique student essays. The curriculum guide contains an annotated bibliography of recommended texts, a sample reading list, sample assignments, sample exercises, and samples of student writing projects. (JDD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

ED303939

CURRICULUM GUIDE:
The Basics of Writing

Advising and Advocacy Service
The Center for the Advancement of Academically Talented Youth
The Johns Hopkins University

EC 212135

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Carol J. Tibbs
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CURRICULUM GUIDE

THE BASICS OF WRITING

Prepared by:
Kim Ports, Instructor
Young Students Program
Center for Talented Youth (CTY)
The Johns Hopkins University
Graduate Student
The University of Maryland

Carol J. Mills, Coordinator
Young Students Program
Center for the Advancement of
Academically Talented Youth (CTY)
The Johns Hopkins University

© Copyright, Center for the Advancement of Academically Talented Youth, The Johns Hopkins University, 1988. All rights reserved.

Foreword

The Following Curriculum Guide is designed to aid in the planning and execution of a writing course for verbally gifted elementary school students. The Basics of Writing course is offered by the Young Students Program, Center for the Advancement of Academically Talented Youth, The Johns Hopkins University. Although our course is conducted during out-of-school hours (on weekends or in the summer), it can easily be modified for in-school use.

Elementary school age children rarely get an opportunity to engage in the study of writing, are seldom guided in the development of their own writing style, and almost never learn or practice the process of critical reading of others' writing. Such experiences are appropriate and necessary for verbally gifted youth. Since you have expressed an interest in our course guide, we assume that you also sense the importance of writing for students who have identified ability in this area. We applaud your understanding of this need and support your efforts.

We hope that this guide will help you in planning an exciting and educationally beneficial course for your students. If you have any reactions to the guide, I would be quite appreciative if you would share them with me.

Carol J. Mills

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Course Description ..... pg. 1
Class Structure ..... pg. 1
Objectives of the Course ..... pg. 2

Topics Covered ..... pg. 3

Format ..... pg. 5
Classroom ..... pg. 5
Home Assignments ..... pg. 6
Planning ..... pg. 6

Evaluation ..... pg. 7

Instructor's Resources ..... pg. 11
Annotated Bibliography of
Recommended Texts ..... pg. 12

Appendices
A. Selection Process A-1
B. Description of a Workshop B-1
C. Sample Reading List, Assignments,
Exercises, and Student Essays C-1
D. Sample Final Course Evaluations D-1

Curriculum Guide for:

"The Basics of Writing"

I. Course Description

The Basics of Writing is designed to instruct students in the fundamentals of communication through descriptive, narrative, and expository writing. The emphasis is on thinking and writing as an interrelated process which involves both skill and conceptual development. Students practice standard grammar, mechanical skills, and sentence, paragraph, and essay structure and development. Students are also challenged to expand their ability to think creatively and logically, and to begin to develop their own original voice and style. Classtime is comprised of discussions of student and professional essays, skill exercises, short creative writing assignments, and thinking games. Students write personal, nonfiction compositions and prepare for classwork at home.

II. Class Structure and Composition

As originally developed, The Basics of Writing Class meets for 2 1/2 to 3 hour sessions once a week for 24 weeks during the academic year or every day for three weeks in the summer. This structure, however, could easily be modified to two, 75-minute class periods or three, 50-minute sessions per week.

The course is designed for a maximum of 15 students ranging in age from eight years to eleven years old whose verbal reasoning skills are at least three years above grade level (see "Selection Procedure," Appendix A). The level of the material in the course is equivalent to most upper high school or college freshman English composition classes. There are no prerequisites in terms of previous writing courses for entrance to the class, but all of the students should display an interest and high ability in both reading and writing.

III. Objectives of the Course

The Basics of Writing can offer students a chance, for some their first chance, to broaden their ability to communicate more openly and effectively with themselves and with others. Although the curriculum is designed to encourage maximum skill and conceptual development in reading and writing, it is also designed to encourage students to develop as original and sophisticated thinkers. While course topics should be carefully designed, ordered, and scheduled, room should be left, within home assignments and during classwork, for sharing and generating ideas. Students in the class may not be concerned with "adult" issues, but they are definitely concerned with many important topics: human relationships and communication, psychological development, family dynamics, academic failure and success, etc. If instructors facilitate concern with and discussion of such topics, students will surely invest their writing with similar concern and commitment. They will be able to make the first important leap as beginning writers - understanding the value of communicating with others in their own voice. Without this understanding, students may improve their mechanical use of language, but the content of their writing will remain superficial.

This integration of the technical and humane aspects of teaching writing is not difficult to accomplish in the classroom. There are several practical methods I have used in both classwork and home assignments. Discussion and analysis of samples of professional writing is one such method. While students are learning to understand the structure of a particular paragraph, for example, identifying the topic sentence and supporting details, they also can be considering the ideas discussed in the paragraph. Debate can be encouraged, with the instructor playing devil's advocate, to help students understand the many sides or implications of an idea. Freewriting could also function this way in class. After students are primed with a given topic, an image, or an opening sentence, they could freewrite for five to fifteen minutes, practice writing freely and continuously, and then share and discuss their various responses. Through such activities, students begin to recognize their own unique perceptions of

ideas and experiences, and such recognition can surely stimulate the students' desire for effective self-expression.

If the students' desire to express their own ideas and experiences increases, then it follows that their desire to learn the most effective way of doing so will also increase. Conversely, as students become more and more confident with the tools of the trade, so they will be more likely to venture into new territory with the content of their writing. It is important, therefore, to maintain a balance between the technical and humane aspects of writing, dividing both home and classwork into equal portions of each. For, if too much of the technical is stressed, students tend to lose interest; they are unable to see the value of the skills and concepts they are practicing. If too much of the humanistic or philosophical is stressed, students may choose to write about engaging topics, but their ability to communicate will probably not greatly improve.

IV. Topics Covered

The following list of skills and concepts represents those topics which should, ideally, be covered in one course offering of the Basics of Writing. Some skills and concepts are addressed directly, in exercises or specific handouts. Others are addressed indirectly, through repeated mention in class discussion or writing workshop, (see description of writing workshop in Appendix B) or in written comments on students' work. The topics are listed in somewhat sequential order; students first tackle writing at the level of individual words, then of sentences, then of paragraphs, and then in terms of complete essays. There is freedom of movement in the list, however, and students often need to jump ahead or retreat, as the course, and their writing, progresses. It is important to note, though, that students begin writing compositions early in the course, starting with one to two handwritten pages, and moving up to three or four pages by the end of the course.

Skills: standard grammar and mechanics

parts of speech
word choice
active and passive voice
sentence structure and variety
combining sentences
paragraph structure, unity, and development
topic and supporting sentences
transitions and transitional phrases
dialogue
concision, verbosity, and redundancy
thesis, focus, and purpose
essay development and organization
introductory, body, and concluding paragraphs
titles
proofreading and editing

(some skills and concepts overlap.)

Concepts: functional fixedness

form and content
imagery
connotation and denotation
facts and inferences
general vs. specific
telling details
fiction vs. nonfiction
description
narration
exposition
tone
constructive criticism
figurative language
figurative vs. literal
focused and freewriting
stated vs. implied thesis
layers of meaning
point of view
revision (re-vision)

V. Format

Classroom:

While students in the Basics of Writing are young enough to want a structured classroom and well-defined authority figures, they are precocious enough to become bored with predictable routines. I try not to repeat the same class plan or format from day to day, and my most successful classes have been divided into a variety of activities which demand that students use different modes of behavior and different learning skills for short periods of time. For instance, within one three hour class, there might be thirty minutes of whole class activity and discussion, thirty minutes of correcting and reviewing exercises, fifteen minutes of break time, forty-five minutes of small group discussion of an essay, another fifteen minute break, fifteen minutes of collecting and going over homework assignments, and thirty minutes of a quiet, individual writing activity. By dividing the leadership of activities between the instructor and a teaching assistant, the instructors can serve individual student needs and keep an active class running smoothly.

When working with students on basic skill exercises, such as grammar or mechanics practice, I try to move as quickly as possible, for two main reasons. First, most of these students are used to being the top student in their classes, and they usually will not apply themselves to an exercise until they are convinced that it is something new and challenging (This happens when they get something wrong or are not as quick to answer as another student in the class.). Second, these students learn quickly, and they are offended by repetition of simple points. By maintaining a brisk, competitive spirit during these exercises, the instructor can teach basic skills, use standard exercises, and not lose student interest. Also, skills can be reinforced in comments on students essays and during writing workshop.

Writing workshop, another important element in the Basics of Writing, serves to develop students' critical reading and

writing skills. Each student should have at least one essay workshopped during the course, and each workshop can last from twenty to fifty minutes. If an average of thirty minutes can be spent on a student essay, and two essays can be workshopped on the same day, then a reasonable portion of classtime will be spent on the process. For suggestions on ways to run a writing workshop, I suggest that instructors read Chapter Eleven of *Writing Instruction for Verbally Talented Youth: The Johns Hopkins Model* (see instructor's resources).

For the most part, I suggest that straight lecture be avoided. The majority of these students have little or no experience taking notes, many in this age group have short attention spans. To teach new concepts, I try to experiment with more active ways of discovering a concept's meaning and use as a class, through board work, role play, analysis of a writing sample, or taking turns reading new material out loud.

Home Assignments:

On average, Students complete two hours of homework for each class meeting. Just as classtime is broken into a variety of activities, so can home assignments be designed to challenge students to apply various skills. When students are assigned a more complex composition assignment, however, additional work is kept to a minimum or omitted. A detailed set of directions for each home assignment should be given. I prefer to prepare a handout which students can go over in class.

Planning:

Spontaneity and flexibility are valuable characteristics for any instructor, but I think they are especially important when working with academically talented students. Often, I prepare a detailed lesson plan and find, for one reason or another, that I need to make last minute changes. If, for instance, students zoom through an exercise, I sometimes use the spare time for fun, creative writing activities, or I might ask if

anyone would like to share some of his or her writing with the class. Overall, I think it is best to overplan, because activities can always be rescheduled.

VI. Evaluation

From start to finish in the Basics of Writing, there are four types of student evaluation: narrative evaluation of classwork, mid-year and final evaluations, standardized pre- post-testing, and a pre- post-test/written essay by the student.

Narrative Evaluation of Classwork

It is extremely important that students receive prompt, detailed, and constructive feedback on their work, so they can maintain a sense of their individual progress. I evaluate most of the student work, and I often ask my teaching assistant to check exercises and short writing activities. A detailed record of all student work is kept, to aid me in writing thorough final evaluations.

Every instructor has his or her own style of responding to student writing. I try to make short technical and content comments in the margins of an essay, and at the end, write a short note to the student, stressing the major strengths and weaknesses of the essay. Whether an essay is outstanding or mediocre, I always try to begin my end comment with praise and end it with a word of encouragement. For some examples of staff commentary on student essays see Appendix C.

Mid-Year and Final Evaluations

Midway through the course, the teacher sends the parents a narrative evaluation of their child's progress as well as a

general description of the goals and basic activities of the course. At the end of the course, the teacher sends a final report to the child and parents assessing the child's overall development in the areas covered in the course. For examples of sample final written teacher evaluations of students, see Appendix D.

Standardized Pre- Post-Testing:

At the beginning and end of the course, the students are given a standardized test (the Sequential Tests of Educational Progress--English Expression) to measure progress in their ability to evaluate the correctness and effectiveness of sentences; i.e., proficiency in standard written English.

Pre- Post-Test Written Essay by Student:

During the first class meeting, students are given a short, in-class writing test, which can be used as a writing sample. This sample is valuable for the instructor to measure the level of the students' skill and ability and also can be measured against a second sample, given as a post-test on the last day of class.

I suggest that the pre- and post-tests be identical, be administered in the same way, and be evaluated on objective score/tally sheets. The tests should last no more than 30 minutes, consisting of one simple, straightforward question which could be answered in a simple essay format.

Included here are a sample test and a sample tally sheet. Many variations of these are possible; however, I suggest that instructors rely on simplistic, objective methods for this pre- and post-test procedure.

Sample: Pre-/Post-Test

Directions:

Please answer the following question as completely and carefully as you can. Take a few moments to think about your answer before you begin writing. Try to use examples to support the points you make as you write. When you have answered the question to the best of your ability, read over your writing to check and correct any mistakes you might have made.

Question:

What is your favorite book? Explain why you value this book, giving as many examples as you can to show why this book is your favorite. Be sure to indicate the title and author of the book.

Pre-/Post-Test Sample Tally Sheet

Rate the level of the writing by evaluating the following aspects of the sample on a scale of one to five: 1 = unacceptable, 2 = below average, 3 = average, 4 = good, 5 = excellent. After each item, space is available for descriptive or prescriptive commentary.

Grammar Skills, Generally.....

Mechanical Skills, Generally.....

Word Choice.....

Sentence Structure.....

Sentence Variety.....

Paragraph Structure.....

Focus/Thesis.....

Paragraph Unity.....

Essay Organization.....

Essay Development.....

Transition/Coherence/Progression.....

Voice.....

Tone.....

Quality of thought.....

Additional Comments:

VII. Instructor's Resources

It is difficult to pin down specific, concrete resources for writing teachers, especially of academically talented students. I have found valuable resources in a variety of unlikely places, in conversations with friends, party games and puzzles (similar to the source of "Molly and Ned"*), and television programs. Anything which stimulates the curiosity and original thinking of students is a valuable source to writing instructors. Some likely sources might be magazines, newspapers, educational television programs, educational journals, instructors' resource files at schools or universities, or the writing center at the university or college with which you are most familiar.

The following list of source texts is by no means a comprehensive one; however, these readers, rhetorics, and handbooks could prove useful to instructors in a variety of ways. I have marked both those texts which could prove especially valuable to instructors teaching the Basics of Writing and those texts which might be candidates for the course text itself. I prefer to prepare a packet containing excerpts from a number of sources, including my own, original handouts and exercises and sample student essays, (see "Sample Lesson Plans, Student Assignments, Exercises, and Student Essays") rather than relying solely on one reader or rhetoric for class and home assignments. Another option, however, might be for an instructor to combine a text with a prepared packet.

Note: It is sometimes difficult to find materials which challenge the reading and writing skills of students in the Basics of Writing, without going over their heads with too sophisticated subject matter. The textbooks which I have starred, I believe are appropriate both in terms of content and skill level, with a few exceptions in each text.

* See *Writing Instruction for Verbally Talented Youth: The Johns Hopkins Model*, Chapter One.

Annotated Bibliography of Recommended Texts

Readers:

The Art of Reading, Gould Diyanni, and Smith, Random House, 1987

A sophisticated text designed for college course, this reader contains various selections from poetry, prose, and fiction texts.

Developing Reading Skills, 2nd edition, Milan, Random House, 1987

Excerpts from this college level text might be used in exercises which stress the relationship between improved critical reading and improved writing skills.

Discovering Ideas: An Anthology for Writers, 2nd edition, Wyrick, Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1987

This reader is divided into social and cultural topics, and for the most part, would appeal to a high school or older student. Some selections, though, could be used with younger writers.

An Introduction To Literature, 7th edition, Barnet, Berman, and Burto, Little, Brown and Company, 1983

This is an excellent beginning anthology of literary greats, including short stories, poetry, and drama. Many selections would be appropriate for discussion and analysis.

The Little, Brown Reader, 3rd edition, Barnet and Stubbs, Little, Brown and company, 1983

Many selections of short quotes, essays, images, and poems can be chosen from this eclectic reader that would be appropriate for young readers.

The Norton Reader, 5th edition, Eastman, general editor, W.W. Norton and Company, 1980

A traditional, straightforward reader containing classic essays and short quotes, this text is a helpful source for instructors. Much of it, however, is too sophisticated for young students.

Prose Models, 7th edition, Levin, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987

This text, designed for college writing courses, combines professional prose models with formal writing instruction. Instructors might find ideas or exercises here, especially on paragraphing.

****The Reading Commitment,** Adelstein and Pival, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978

This book has a wonderful selection of short essays, many of which are appropriate for young readers, and could be used as the text for the Basics of Writing, with or without a handbook. The pre- and post-reading activities are excellent as well. Some of the later selections in the book are probably too sophisticated, and should be left out of the course plan.

Short Essays, 3rd edition, Levin, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983

Although this reader contains a limited selection of prose, some essays are appropriate for class discussion.

Studies in the Short Story, 6th edition, Madden and Scott, Holt Rinehart Winston, 1984

Instructors could find appropriate short stories and critical instruction in this varied collection of short stories.

Ways of Reading: An Anthology of Writers, Bartholomae and Petrosky, St. Martin's Press, 1987

This reader is, for the most part, too sophisticated for young readers. It is, however, carefully written and compiled, and offers many ideas to writing instructors.

The Writer's World, Arms, Gibbon, and Lock, St. Martin's Press, 1978

Instructors may find some suggestions for teaching various rhetorical strategies in this sophisticated reader, organized by social issue.

The Writing Reader: Short Essays for Composition, Raphael, Macmillan, 1979

The opening chapters of this text could be especially helpful to instructors, outlining ways of reading and writing an essay. Many of the essays in this reader would also be appropriate for young readers.

Rhetorics:

**The Elements of Style,* 3rd edition, Strunk and White, Macmillan, 1979

A standard of writing textbooks, this text is a dry, concise, authoritative text on basic skills and concepts. All teachers of writing should know this work.

**Informative Writing,* Hammond, McGraw-Hill, 1985

Gene Hammond's clear, concise writing style makes this textbook easy to read. He makes many valuable suggestions on the conceptual development of writing students.

Practical Guide to Writing, 4th edition, Barnet and Stubbs, Little, Brown and Company, 1983

This is a difficult rhetoric to use in a classroom because it is somewhat dry, organized in rhetorical strategies, and emphasizing the intellectual, rather than the creative process. It does offer some practical tips and ideas for instructors, though.

Steps to Writing Well, Wyrick, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979

This rhetoric emphasizes writing as a process involving both skill and conceptual development, and includes helpful selections on grammar and mechanics.

Writing from the Inside, Sullivan and Core, W.W. Norton and Company, 1983

Breaking down writing into basic components, such as general rhetorical modes, sentences, and paragraphs, Sullivan and Core could offer instructors some helpful ideas about teaching basic skills. This text has an excellent "writer's checklist" and glossary.

Writing Well, 4th edition, Hall, Little, Brown and Company, 1982

Donald Hall is a wonderful writer and offers writers many useful and original ideas about teaching writing. The sections on "words" and "paragraphs" are particularly interesting--a poet's point of view.

**Writing with Style: Conversations on the Art of Writing,* Trimble, Prentice-Hall, 1975

Trimble's conversational and frank style make for easy reading. He is particularly adept in analyzing original voice, appropriate style, a writer's investment in writing, and the weaknesses of always writing by the book, so to speak--an interesting contrast to The Elements of Style.

Handbooks/Workbooks:

English Fundamentals, form C, 8th edition, Emery, Kierzik, Lindblom, Macmillan, 1987

This is a short practical handbook which concentrates on the most basic skills.

* *Sentence Combining: A Composing Book*, Strong, Random House, 1973

A useful source of in-class exercises, this text introduces sentence combining simply and straightforwardly.

****Shared Prose: Process to Product**, Bator, Holt, Reinhart, and Winston, 1985

This rhetoric is paced well, beginning with pre-writing techniques, moving through the components of an effective essay, and winding up with a look at fine points. It is fairly easy to read and includes a good variety of carefully crafted exercises. It is, also, primarily skill-oriented--possibly a candidate for a course text.

***Warriner's English Grammar and Composition,** Franklin Edition, 3rd course, John Warriner, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982

While this text could be a required handbook for young writers, it may serve best as a resource for instructors. The text thoroughly covers a wide range of grammatical, mechanical, and stylistic skills, with many exercises in each area.

The Writer's Options, 2nd edition, Daiker, Kerek, and Morenberg, Harper and Row, 1982

This exercise- and process-oriented text could be used as a course text, but student of the Basics of Writing may feel overwhelmed by a continual stream of sentence combining exercises. Instructors would find excerpts occasionally helpful in the classroom, though.

Teaching Instruction:

***Teaching Students to Write**, Newman, Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1980

This text is an extremely well-written, humane, and detailed guide to teaching writing, with excellent advice on developing rapport in the classroom, working on the student-teacher

relationship, structuring a course, and generating different modes of teaching.

Teaching Writing, Hammond, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1983

This text is primarily designed for college composition instructors, but it offers some helpful advice on teaching very specific skills and concepts, particularly essay development, audience, grammar, and writing processes.

**Writing Instruction for Verbally Talented Youth: The Johns Hopkins Model,* Reynolds, Kopelke, and Durden, Aspen Publication, 1984

All writing instructors at CTY should read this manual for instructors, which, although it directs itself to older students, offers a new perspective on teaching writing and teaching itself. Instructors can gain much from the suggestions for an informal, integrated classroom.

* = Possible course text
** = Texts of marked value for instructors

Appendix A

Selection Process

Eligibility Testing

Eligibility is based on students' scores on an out-of-level administration of the School and College Ability Test (SCAT).

The SCAT is a measure of mathematical and verbal reasoning ability. There are two separate parts to this test: verbal and quantitative. The verbal section measures a student's understanding of the relationships between words. The quantitative section measures the student's ability to see relationships between quantities expressed in mathematical terms. The total working time for the test is forty minutes. Each section is allotted twenty minutes.

One of three levels of the SCAT is administered to students applying for the Young Students Program. In all cases, students are given a test designed for older students. Youngsters in the first and second grades, and beginning of third grade are given the Elementary Level (designed for end-of-year third graders through beginning-of-the-year sixth graders); youngsters at the end of third grade, in the fourth grade, and beginning of fifth grade are given the Intermediate Level (designed for end-of-year sixth graders through beginning-of-year ninth graders); and youngsters at the end of fifth grade and in the sixth grade are administered the Advanced Level (designed for end-of-year ninth graders through end-of-year twelfth graders).

Typically, young people who are able to reason like older, more advanced students do well in classes taught at a faster

pace and in more depth. The selection criteria must provide a way to identify young people who would most likely benefit from such an experience. For this reason the selection criteria focuses on assessing a young person's ability to reason well either mathematically or verbally. Students are selected for admission into the classes based on a comparison of their performance on the SCAT with the performance of a norm group of older students.

For the Basics of Writing course, students are selected if they score better than 70% of students (according to national norms) three grades higher than them. In other words, a second grader must have a score higher than the 70th percentile according to fifth grade norms. For a third grader, sixth grade norms would be used.

Appendix B

Description of a Workshop

A writing workshop is the process of the class actively, in person, discussing and critiquing a student's essay.

The goal of a workshop is to reveal the strengths and weaknesses of a student's writing through back and forth discussion between members of the class.

A dual goal of the workshop is for the students to develop critical skills. Rather than giving blanket statements of approval or disapproval such as "I like it," the students must articulate the strengths and weaknesses by explaining why. For example: Why is the conclusion compelling? Why is this a particularly effective sentence? Why is the meaning of this paragraph unclear?

The students probably will take some time to learn to workshop effectively. At the start, the instructor may have to guide discussion completely, but as the students gain experience with the process, it is desirable that they come to run the workshop as independently as possible, with the instructor acting as a traffic cop.

To facilitate development of critical skills, it may prove useful to assign each student a specific task in the workshop. A list of assignment duties might include: details, concrete language, sentence structure, paragraph structure, essay structure, and transitions.

During the workshop it is advisable that the author not be allowed to speak except at the beginning, to allow for last-second corrections, and at the end, to allow for a rebuttal. During the workshop, however, the author should have no

input, as the idea is for the author to see how others are interpreting the essay.

Sample Steps of Workshop

1. Instructor duplicates a student essay and distributes it to the class at least one class session before the workshop.

2. For homework, students read and write comments on the essay, complete the Workshop Guide Questions (see copy at end of this appendix), and prepare their specific workshop task.

3. Author's prefatory remarks.

4. Workshop--subject criticisms, followed by general discussion.

5. Author's closing comments.

6. Students hand back annotated copies of the essay to the author.

Workshop Guide Questions -- Answer each question completely in the space provided.

1. What is the main point or thesis of the essay? Is it clear or unclear? Why?

2. Does the essay begin well? Are the title and first paragraph engaging? Why or why not?

3. In the body of the essay, does the author support the essay's main point with several smaller points? How? What are the supporting points of the essay?

4. When you get to the end of the essay, does it conclude well? Do you feel that it is complete or incomplete? Explain.

5. Are there examples and details to support each point in the essay? Where does the author need more details and examples? Is there any place where there are unnecessary details? Explain.

6. Could you find any mechanical or grammatical problems? Mark them in the text of the essay. What seems to be the author's weakness with mechanics or grammar?

7. What do you think is the strongest element in the essay? Why?

8. What do you think needs the most work in the essay? Why?

Appendix C

Sample Reading List, Assignments, Exercises, and Student Essays

Sample Reading List

The following are the essays and readings used by this instructor to comprise a student reader for the Basics of Writing course.*

"Summer Beyond Wish," Russell Baker, from *The Norton Reader,* 5th ed.

"To Make Papa Proud," Gregory H. Hemingway, M.D., from *The Reading Commitment,* 1st ed.

"A Properly Trained Man is Dog's Best Friend," Erma Bombeck, from *The Reading Commitment*, 1st ed.

From "On the Ball," Roger Angell, from *The Reading Commitment,* 1st ed.

"Terror at Tinker Creek," Annie Dillard, *The Reading Commitment,* 1st ed.

"Beautiful Day," Dave Kindred, from *The Reading Commitment*, 1st ed.

"The Road not Taken," Robert Frost, from *Discovering Ideas,* 2nd ed.

"I Have a Dream," Martin Luther King, Jr., from *The Writer's World.*

"Twenty-Six Ways to Start Writing," Donald Murray, from *Discovering Ideas*, 2nd ed.

"Memories of Christmas," Dylan Thomas, from *The Norton Reader,* 5th ed.

"Picking Cotton," Mary Angelou, from *Short Essays,* 3rd ed.

"The Girl's Room," Laura Cunningham, from *The Little, Brown Reader,* 3rd ed.

"The Lake Isle of Innisfree," William Butler Yeats, from *The Little, Brown Reader,* 3rd ed.

"Frustrations of the Gifted," Norman C. Murphy, from *The Writer's World.*

"Rock of Ages," Joan Didion, from *The Writing Reader.*

"How to Write with Style," Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., from *The Writing Reader.*

"Listening," by Eudora Welty, from *The Writing Reader.*

"Little Red Cap," from *The Complete Grimm's Fairy Tales* Pantheon Books, New York. 1944, 1972

"Little Red Riding Hood Revisited," Russell Baker, from *Practical Guide to Writing*, 4th ed.

"The Red Wheelbarrow," William Carlos Williams, from *An Introduction to Literature,* 7th ed.

"Point of View," from *Studies in the Short Story*, 6th ed.

"I like to see it lap the miles," Emily Dickinson, from *An Introduction to Literature,* 7th ed.

* For complete bibliographic listing of each source see the "*Annotated Bibliography of Recommended Texts.*"

"The Yachts," William Carlos Williams, from *An Introduction to Literature,* 7th ed.

"Kubla Khan," Samuel Taylor Coleridge, from *An Introduction to Literature,* 7th ed.

"My Papa's Waltz," Theodore Roethke, from *An Introduction to Literature,* 7th ed.

"Poetry," Marianne Moore, from *An Introduction to Literature,* 7th ed.

"Ars Poetica," Archibald Macleish, from *An Introduction to Literature,* 7th ed.

"A Navajo Blanket," May Swenson, from *An Introduction to Literature,* 7th ed.

Suggested Grammar Readings

"The Sentence, Language, Parts of Speech, Sentence Combining and Revision," from *Shared Prose.*

"Italics and Quotation Marks," from *Warriner's English Grammar and Composition.*

"Introduction to Sentence Combining," from *Sentence Combining.*

Sample Assignments

Home Assignment

1. Read "Beautiful Day," by Dave Kindred.* Mark three of your favorite details.

2. Prepare essays (names of students to be workshopped would be given) for workshop.

3. Writing Assignment: Is there an event or experience in your past which you can remember vividly? Why do you remember it? Was it happy? scary? sad? a learning experience? In a 2-3 page narrative, tell the story of that experience or event, letting the telling facts or details show how you felt and what you were thinking.

Before you write, think about how Annie Dillard, in "Terror at Tinker Creek,"* and Dave Kindred in "Beautiful Day," really let the telling details and facts show the reader how she and he felt in their essays. The essays were both much more interesting and lively because of the abundance of telling facts and details and the lack of inference statements.

Be sure to give your narrative a creative title. Please make sure your final copy is neatly written (for some of you that means re-copying your work for neatness), and that you leave space in the right and left margins for my comments.

* "Beautiful Day," Dave Kindred, and "Terror at Tinker Creek," Annie Dillard from *The Reading Commitment,* Adelstein and Pival, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich

Home Assignment

Is there anyone in your life who is really important to you? Who? Why? Think back over all your experiences with this special person. Are there any experiences which you have shared that show, as an extended example, the relationship you have with him or her? For instance, do you remember a time when he or she was there to comfort you when you were sad? Help you when you had a problem? Keep you company when you were lonely? Share your joy when you were happy or proud?

In a 2-3 page personal essay, show your readers why this person is important to you, using at least one extended, narrative example. Use all you know about effective word choice, description, and detail to make your composition imaginative and effective.

Home Assignment

Read "The Girl's Room," by Laura Cunningham.* In your own words, try to write the main idea of the essay in one sentence, but try to be as specific as possible.

* "The Girl's Room," Laura Cunningham, from *The Little, Brown Reader,* 3rd edition, Barnet and Stubbs, Little, Brown and Company, 1983 Home Assignment

1. Read "A Properly Trained Man is Dog's Best Friend," by Erma Bombeck.*

2. Writing Assignment

You are going to write an essay on 2-3 pages about yourself, from someone else's point of view. Just as Erma Bombeck, in

her short essay. writes from the point of view of her family pet, your essay will be from someone else's point of view, in their voice, in which "he" or "she" makes a point about you (the thesis), shows who you are, shows the relationship you have with "him" or "her," and reveals "his" or "her" thoughts and feelings about you, through telling details and examples. The essay can focus on any aspect of you and your relationship with the speaker, as long as it is centered around a main point, or thesis, and as long as its supporting points are also developed with details and examples.

* "A Properly Trained Man is Dog's Best Friend," Erma Bombeck, From *The Reading Commitment,* Adelstein and Pival, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich

Home Assignment

Choose one of the compositions which you have written that has been returned to you with my comments, and revise it completely. The new version of the essay you turn in will be put into a collection of the class' work, which will be sent out to everyone with the final evaluations. The original essay will also be returned to you then, with my comments.

Revision means re-writing and re-working your essay so that it best conveys, develops, and supports the main idea that you want it to. Some of you will want to revise the essay that the class has workshopped. If you do, consider the class' comments while you work on your revision. Others will choose essays which have only been commented on by me. That's fine, but you may want to use the workshop guide questions to help <u>you</u> evaluate more carefully the strengths and weaknesses of the original essay.

Your revision should reveal significant improvements on the essay. Correcting spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors

is not revision. You will probably need to expand in places, cut in places, work on sentence and paragraph structure, play around with your title and word choice, etc. In other words, try to apply all that you have learned about effective writing so far to this revision assignment.

NOUN EXERCISE "PLAYING WITH A POEM"

Below is a short poem written by William Carlos Williams, an American Poet. The nouns in the poem have been left blank. Your job is to create your own unique version of the poem by filling in the blanks with your choice of nouns. Use your imagination and see what you can do.

"The Red _____" by William Carlos Williams so much depends upon a red _____ _____ glazed with _____ _____beside the white

_____ACTIVE VERB EXERCISE

Directions: Fill in the blanks with active verbs to complete the excerpt from *The Wind in the Willows*, by Kenneth Grahame. In this excerpt, Toad is jumping off a train which has helped him escape from jail. He is disguised as a washer woman.

"Toad jumped, _____ down a short embankment, picked himself up unhurt, _____ into the wood and _____.

Peeping out, he _____ his train get up speed again and _____ at a great pace. Then out of the tunnel _____ the pursuing engine, _____ and _____, her motley crew waving their various weapons and _____ "Stop! stop! stop!" When they were past, Toad had a hearty laugh--for the first time since he was _____ into prison.

But he soon _____ laughing when he came to consider that it was now very late and dark and cold, and he was in an unknown wood, with no money and no chance for supper, and

still far from friends and home; and the dead silence of everything, after the roar and rattle of the train, was something of a shock. He _____ not leave the shelter of the trees, so he _____ into the wood, with the idea of _____ the railway as far as possible behind him.

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE:

Liven any three of the following six sentences using figurative language. One of your three must be a simile, one a metaphor and one a personification. Be as descriptive as possible.

1. It was a hot day.

2. At the beach we watched the waves and seagulls.

3. Time passed slowly on the long car ride.

4. He was frightened in the dark hall.

5. The chair is in the corner of the kitchen.

6. The garbage truck on our street makes a lot of noise.

Creative assignment:

Choice 1:

Look at one of the objects in the front of the room from all angles, concentrating on finding something that it reminds you of (this could be another inanimate object or something alive). Then write an extended metaphor or personification consisting of 3-4 sentences in which you compare the object to the same thing several times.

Choice 2:

What is it like to write an essay? Is it the same kind of enjoyable, nourishing activity described by Eve Merriam in "How to Eat a Poem"? What kinds of other activities could you compare it with? Write an extended metaphor comparing writing an essay with another activity.

"Show, Don't Tell"

How can these "telling" sentences below be changed into effective, imaginative, and interesting "showing" statements?

1. I was bored in class.

2. My mother is nice.

3. I love spring.

4. I hate classical music.

5. Riding a bike is fun.

6. There are many exciting things to do in town.

7. Reading is very interesting, and I really like to read fantasy books.

8. That was the worst dinner I ever ate.

9. I took a lonely but pleasant walk in the woods.

10. Writing an essay can be a difficult thing.

DESCRIPTION 1

The thick, heavy smoke, that could be seen for miles, filled the blue July sky. Firemen frantically battled the blaze that engulfed Hempstead High School, while a crowd of people sadly looked on. Eyes started to fill with tears as the reality of having no school to go to slowly started to sink in. Students that had once downed everything the high school stood for and did, began to realize how much they cared for their school. But it was too late, it was going up in smoke.

A Student Writer

DESCRIPTION 2

We were on the porch only a short time when I heard a lot of hollering coming toward the field. The hollering and crying got louder and louder. I could hear Mama's voice over all the rest. It seemed like all the people in the field were running to our house. I ran to the edge of the porch to watch them top the hill. Daddy was leading the running crowd and Mama was right behind him.

"Lord have mercy, my children is in that house!" Mama was screaming. "Hurry, Diddly!" she cried to Daddy. I turned around and saw big clouds of smoke booming out of the front door and shooting out of cracks everywhere. "There, Essie Mae is on the porch," Mama said. "Hurry, Diddly! Get Adline outta that house!" I looked back at Adline. I couldn't hardly see her for the smoke.

George Lee was standing in the yard like he didn't know what to do. As Mama got closer, he ran into the house. My first thought was that he would be burned up. I'd often hoped he would get killed, but I guess I didn't really want him to die after all. I ran inside after him, but he came running out again, knocking me down and leaving me lying face down in the burning room. I jumped up quickly and scrambled out

after him. He had the water bucket in his hands. I thought he going to try to put out the fire. Instead he placed the bucket on the edge of the porch and picked up Adline in his arms.

Moments later Daddy was on the porch. He ran straight into the burning house with three other men right behind him. They opened the large wooden windows to let some of the smoke out and began ripping the paper from the walls before the wood caught on fire. Mama and two other women raked it into the fireplace with sticks, broom handles, and anything else available. Everyone was coughing because of all the smoke.

Anne Moody

PUNCTUATION

I. Comma (,)

1. Use a comma to separate two complete sentences joined by a coordinate conjunction (and, but, or, nor, for, yet).

EXAMPLES:

I placed the typed sheet on his desk, and he picked it up and read slowly.

His face turned red, but he did not say a word.

2. Use a comma to separate words, phrases, or clauses in a series of three or more items.

EXAMPLES:

The house was empty, cold, and dark. (3 adjectives)

She rushed into the house, up the stairs, and into her room. (3 prepositional phrases)

Larry fetched the water, Mort built the fire, and I opened the cans. (3 independent clauses)

3. Use a comma to set off introductory dependent clauses.

EXAMPLES:

Although we did not enjoy the performance, we applauded politely.

When the weather is fine, I hate to stay inside.

4. Use a comma to set off long introductory phrases.

EXAMPLES:

To get a better view of the stage, I sat on the steps.

5. Use a pair of commas to set off a nonrestrictive or nonessential clause or phrase that interrupts the main clause of a sentence and is not essential to identify the word it modifies.

EXAMPLES:

Jim, who is the producer of the film, will select the camera angles.

- The main clause is "Jim will select the camera angles." The nonessential clause "who is the producer of the film" is not essential to identify the noun "Jim" that it modifies.

My father, wishing more detailed information, wrote to the secretary.

- The main clause is "My father wrote to the secretary." The nonessential phrase "wishing more detailed information" is not necessary to identify the noun "father" that it modifies.

DO NOT use commas to set off restrictive or essential clauses or phrases.

EXAMPLE:

Anyone wishing more detailed information should write to the secretary.

- The essential phrase "wishing more detailed information" is necessary to identify the pronoun "Anyone" that it modifies.

6. Use a pair of commas to set off appositives. (An appositive is a noun unit that immediately follows a noun or pronoun and stands for the same thing or person.)

EXAMPLES:

The new boy, the one with red hair, likes me.

Senator Smith, a dedicated environmentalist, objected to the bill.

7. Use a pair of commas to set off parenthetical expressions. These are words, phrases, or clauses that break into a sentence to explain, to emphasize, to qualify, or to point the direction of thought.

EXAMPLES:

The text, moreover, had not been carefully proofread.

The dolphin, for example, is a smart animal.

His appearance, I must say, was striking.

II. Semicolon (;)

1. Use a semicolon to separate two complete sentences that are not joined by a coordinate conjunction.

EXAMPLES:

We waited patiently in the lobby; we could not bring ourselves to leave without Cindy and Brian.

Note: A semicolon is needed to punctuate two independent clauses joined by a conjunctive adverb (therefore, however, otherwise, nevertheless, consequently, etc.). Usually a comma is used after the conjunctive adverb.

EXAMPLES:

John is an exceptional athlete; moreover, he is an excellent student.

Ellen had been a high school teacher for five years; however, she decided to embark on a new career.

2. Use a semicolon to separate items in a series when the items themselves include commas.

EXAMPLE:

We invited three people: Liz, a leading actress; Charlotte, an expert linguist; and Mary, the editor of the paper.

III. Colon (:)

1. Use a colon to introduce a formal list.

EXAMPLES:

We need these ingredients for the dessert: milk, eggs, chocolate, sugar, butter, and flour.

The following are among the best-known figures of speech: metaphor, simile, personification.

DO NOT use a colon after a linking verb or a preposition.

EXAMPLES:

Faulty - Some chief noisemakers are: automobiles, airplanes, and buses.

Faulty - The hiker's equipment should consist of: a flashlight, an ax, and a compass.

2. Use a colon between two independent clauses when the second explains or amplifies the first.

EXAMPLE:

Music is more than something mechanical: it is an expression of deep feeling and ethical values.

3. Use a colon to introduce a formal quotation or statement.

EXAMPLES:

She reminded him of Pope's words: "A little learning is a dangerous thing."

There is an old saying that would seem to apply here: one man's meat is another man's poison

4. Use a colon to introduce a formal appositive.

EXAMPLES:

There is only one thing on his mind: money.

One emotion overpowered all the rest: gratitude.

Punctuation Exercise

Choose the necessary punctuation for the sentences below. Some need no punctuation.

a. comma (,)
b. semi-colon (;)
c. colon (:)
d. no punctuation needed

1. When Craig moved into his new apartment____he was surprised to learn that his roommates practiced a mysterious religion.

2. Before he even got through the doorway____they made him put on a chef's hat and recite the Greek alphabet backwards.

3. He complained for weeks____however, they refused to compromise their values.

4. Three times daily, they did push-ups and ate raw eggs____ twice weekly they gave their worldly possessions to charity.

5. Craig learned that their religion had one central belief____do unto others.

6. He once asked why his roommates meditated frequently in the garden shed____behind the house.

7. They gave no reply____they were not permitted to speak on alternate Thursdays.

8. After several frustrating months____Craig decided that he could only understand their faith by throwing himself into it earnestly and whole-heartedly.

9. He went to a religious supplies supermarket and purchased these items____his very own chef's hat, a tongue depressor, two pounds of bird seed, and a pair of Nikes.

10. He used these articles with great pride____moreover, he began to find new meaning in the rituals he performed.

11. He felt that his character was being strengthened by self-discipline, charity, prayer____and a great appreciation of life's simple pleasures.

12. Craig could hardly believe that at one time he had considered his roommates dangerous____and mentally warped.

13. They had proven to him that there is more than one way to live____and he would never again maintain such a narrow-minded attitude.

14. In addition____he attained cosmic consciousness and oneness with the universe.

SENTENCE PARTS

VERBS

A **VERB** signals the performance of an action, the occurrence of an event, or the presence of a condition. The English Proficiency Exam is concerned with only two kinds of verbs: **LINKING VERBS** and **ACTION VERBS.**

1. **LINKING VERBS** - Common **LINKING VERBS** are seem, appear, become, taste, feel, smell, look, and forms of "to be" (am, is, are, was, were, has been).

   A. A **LINKING VERB** indicates a state of being.

   B. A **LINKING VERB** connects the subject to a subject complement which may be an adjective or a noun. If the subject complement is a noun, it renames the subject; if it is an adjective, it describes the subject. The subject complement can only be a noun, pronoun, or an adjective. The linking verb must always complete the link (as in a chain between the subject and the subject complement).

EXAMPLES:

S LV SC (adj)

1. She is tall.

S LV SC (noun)

2. He became a teacher.

S LV SC (adj)

3. The food tasted very good.

2. **ACTIVE VERBS** - An **ACTIVE VERB** expresses the action of the clause.

   A. An **ACTIVE VERB** sometimes has a direct object to complete its meaning.

EXAMPLES:

S AV
1. He reads.

S AV DO
2. He reads books.

SUBJECTS

A **SUBJECT** is the doer of the action in a clause with an **ACTIVE VERB,** or the who/what in a clause with a **LINKING VERB.** To find the **SUBJECT** of a clause, ask "WHO?" or "WHAT?" before the verb. A **SUBJECT** is a noun or noun equivalent (pronoun, noun clause, verbal phrase).

EXAMPLES:

S V
1. Tom may be the team captain next season. (noun)

S V
2. He may be team captain next season. (pronoun)

S V
3. What newspapers say may be false. (noun clause)

S V
4. Being the team captain may be the greatest honor Tom will ever receive. (verbal phrase)

DIRECT OBJECTS

A **DIRECT OBJECT** of a verb is a noun or noun equivalent that completes a statement. It generally follows an **ACTIVE VERB.** To find the **DIRECT OBJECT** of a clause, ask "WHAT?" or "WHOM?" after the verb.

EXAMPLES:

S V DO
1. The boy ate dinner.
   - *ate what? - dinner (a noun)*

S V DO
2. He wondered what he should do.
   - *wondered what? - what he should do (noun clause)*

N V DO
3. The Sherwoods have decided to buy a home.
   - *have decided what? - to buy a home (verbal or infinitive phrase)*

S V DO
4. Terry took Jane home.
   - *took whom? - Jane (a noun)*

DO V S V
5. Whom did Terry take home?
   - *did take whom? - whom (A pronoun)*

ADJECTIVES

An **ADJECTIVAL MODIFIER** describes, limits, or qualifies a noun or pronoun. An **ADJECTIVE** can be a single word, subject complement, prepositional phrase, clause, or verbal phrase. The typical position of an **ADJECTIVE** is near the word it modifies.

EXAMPLES:

ADJ S V

1. The big dog is gone. (a single word)

S V ADJ

2. The big dog is fierce. (a subject complement, also called a predicate adjective)

S ADJ V

3. The big dog with his pointed teeth scares me. (a prepositional phrase)

S ADJ V

4. The big dog who has sharp teeth scares me. (An adjective clause)

S ADJ V

5. The big dog, sitting by the door, forced me to stop in my tracks. (a verbal, participial phrase)

S V ADJ

6. I had a great desire to stand very still when the big dog began to growl. (a verbal, infinitive phrase)

ADVERBS

An **ADVERB** is used to modify a word, or group of words, other than nouns or pronouns. An **ADVERB** describes, qualifies, or limits a verb. Adjective, or another adverb. Many **ADVERBS** end in -ly.

EXAMPLES:

S V ADV

1. He was running fast.
   - *"fast" modifies the VERB "was running"*

S V ADV

2. The night is very dark.
   - *"very" modifies the ADJECTIVE "dark"*

S ADV V

3. The new father very carefully picked up his new daughter.
   - *"very" modifies the ADVERB "carefully"*

An **ADVERB** tells certain things about the verb, the most common being

1. Manner: John performed well.
2. Time: I must leave now.
3. Frequency: We often go on picnics.
4. Place: There he sat.
5. Direction: The policeman turned away.
6. Degree: I absolutely refuse to believe that story.

THE MOST FREQUENTLY USED ADVERBS supply answers to the questions "HOW?" (manner), "WHEN?" (time and frequency), "WHERE?" (place).

An **ADVERB** can be a single word, a prepositional phrase, or a clause.

EXAMPLES:

S ADV V
1. She tenderly handed the baby to her husband. (a single word)
   - *"tenderly" tells "HOW" she handed the baby*

ADV S V
2. After lunch I went home. (a prepositional phrase)
   - *"after lunch" tells "WHEN" I went*

ADV S V
3. Since we could not pay the fine, we could not drive the car. (an adverbial clause)
   - *"since we could not pay the fine" tells "WHY" we could not drive*

S V ADV
4. We parted where the path separated. (an adverbial clause)
   - *"where the path separated" tell "WHERE" we parted*

THE MOST COMMON TYPE OF ADVERB CLAUSE answers direct questions about the action in the sentence--"WHEN?" (clause of time), "WHERE?" (clause of place), "WHY?" (clause of reason).

Sentence Parts Worksheet

In the following sentences, several words, phrases, and clauses have been underlined. Each word or group of words serves a function in the sentence: it is either a subject, a verb, a direct object, an adjective, or an adverb. Decide what function the underlined word or words serve in each of the sentences below.

1. Some of these cottages were reshingled last year.
2. The route that we chose will take us through Gettysburg and Harper's Ferry.
3. The second car kept close in an effort to pass.
4. Steve patiently waited for his parents.
5. Repairing bicycles is a fun and useful hobby.
6. The children all ordered frozen yogurt.
7. I thought that I would find him in the car.
8. Steve found a necklace while cleaning out his car.
9. Without looking up, Jim answered the teacher's question.
10. Mike located the racquet-ball courts after much difficulty.
11. Lunch with Mr. Davis was very nice.
12. We ate chicken salad sandwiches, and we drank white wine.
13. The dishes in the kitchen need to be washed.
14. I haven't heard about the test results yet.
15. Working from 9 to 5 every weekday can be tiring.

16. After the movies, we went home.

17. For a while, things looked grim.

18. Since I was late, I missed the first half of the movie.

19. On Tuesday, Joe and Fred walked to school.

20. That we were lost was evident.

Sentence Construction

The Sentence Construction section of the English Proficiency Exam requires knowledge of the following errors on sentence construction:

a. Sentence Fragments
b. Double Sentences
c. Faulty Parallelism

A. Sentence Fragments: A complete sentence must be able to stand alone as an independent unit. A sentence fragment occurs when either a phrase or a subordinate clause is treated as though it is a sentence. There are three common types of sentence fragments:

1. A subordinate clause standing as a sentence

   INCORRECT: Since his cat was dead.
   CORRECT: Since his cat was dead, he decided to breed dogs.

2. A verbal phrase punctuated as a sentence.

   INCORRECT: Realizing that the plant was too tall.
   CORRECT: Realizing that the plant was too tall, Mary cut a whole in the roof for it.

3. A noun followed by a phrase or a subordinate clause but lacking a verb to show its action, being, or possession.

   INCORRECT: Doris, a tireless worker with flat feet.
   CORRECT: The committee will include Doris, a tireless worker with flat feet.

B. Double Sentences: This term refers to run-on sentences or comma splices. A double sentence results when two sentences are punctuated as if they were one. This common mistake can be fixed by correctly punctuating the two sentences (often, by using a semi-colon or a period instead

of a comma to separate the two independent clauses), or using subordination to establish the main idea:

1.

INCORRECT: The old mansion was in great need of repair, many windows were broken, much of the paint was gone.
CORRECT: The old mansion was in great need of repair. Many windows were broken and much of the paint was gone.

OR:

The old mansion was in great need of repair since many windows were broken and much of the paint was gone.

2.

INCORRECT: An old stone barn stood next to the house it too had begun to cave in on one side.
CORRECT: An old stone barn stood next to the house. It too had begun to cave in on one side.

OR:

An old stone barn stood next to the house, but it too had begun to cave in on one side.

C. **Faulty Parallelism:** The principal of **parallelism** dictates that items in a series should be the same part of speech; that is, nouns should be balanced with nouns, adjectives with adjectives, participial phrases with participial phrases, clauses with clauses:

INCORRECT: She spent the day hiking up the mountain, chopping wood, and cooked dinner.
CORRECT: She spent the day hiking up the mountain, chopping wood, and cooking dinner.

Sentence Construction Worksheet

The following sentences contain errors in sentence structure. Choose the error that best describes the particular problem in the sentence, or, if the sentence is correct, choose "no error".

a. Sentence Fragment
b. Double Sentence
c. Faulty Parallelism
d. No Error

1. Although I made sure that I put enough soap in the dishwasher.

2. To walk home, to go to mixers, and drinking beer are my favorite pastimes.

3. I have often said that although life can be defined quite specifically in terms of its physical qualities.

4. Alan is a fine racquetball player, a great basketball player, and is a dynamite baseball player.

5. The bulldog was kicked by his owner, he was always misbehaving.

6. Because she was the best choice for the job and she wanted the position.

7. We went to the movies, flew kites, and cheese.

8. I spent the day shoveling snow, I wished that I could go to Florida.

9. My car, probably the only one of its kind that can stall before I turn the key.

10. He was happy, and everyone enjoyed his company.

11. Tom went to the store, the bar, and to cash a check.

12. James took the bus to Georgetown, it was his favorite place to go on Saturday nights.

13. She saw him on Tuesday afternoons.

14. Carol made too much Tempura, we ate until we were sick.

English Word Clusters Information Sheet

The section of the proficiency exam that deals with word clusters requires a knowledge of both clauses and phrases. The student must be able to identify four word groups:

a. Independent Clauses
b. Dependent Clauses
c. Verbal Phrases
d. Prepositional Phrases

Clauses:

A clause is a group of words that must contain a subject and a verb. All clauses can be described as either dependent or independent. A dependent clause includes a subject and a verb but can't stand alone as a complete sentence because it depends on another clause to complete the thought.

EXAMPLES:

Jon rode well because he was patient and gentle.
Whenever he rode, people remarked that he seemed to have a special way of communicating with horses.

An independent clause is a group of words including a subject and a verb that forms a complete idea and can stand alone as a sentence.

EXAMPLES:

Jon bought a new horse.
After he brought it home, he groomed it.

Phrases:

A phrase is a sequence of 2 or more words conveying a single thought or forming a distinct part of a sentence but not containing a subject and a predicate. Two common types are verbal phrases and prepositional phrases.

A **verbal** is a verb form that functions as either an adjective or a noun. There are four basic types.

1. Infinitive: To + verb. Ex: to drive, to win
   Claire needs to rent a truck.

2. Past Participle: Verb + ed. Ex: burned, broken
   The freshly painted townhouse looked clean and bright.

3. Present Participle: verb + ing. Ex: running, speaking
   Feeling hungry, she ate her shoe.

4. Gerund: verb + ing (acting as a noun) Ex: reading sleeping
   Jumping off the building was a mistake, Randolf decided.

A **prepositional phrase** consists of two parts. One part is a word that suggests position, direction, or time (such as after, in, of, from), and the other part is a noun serving as the object of the preposition. Modifiers are often present also.

Examples:

After she signed the lease, she purchased a beautiful loveseat from an antique shop.

When the alarm clock rang he picked it up and pitched it through the window.

Word Clusters Work Sheet

The following underlined groups of words are either clauses or phrases. Choose which type of clause or phrase each group of words is.

a. Independent clause
b. Dependent Clause
c. Verbal Phrase
d. Prepositional Phrase

1. After the grades are recorded, the names of those who have passed the final will be posted on the bulletin board in the Dean's office.

2. Reaching a decision about his future was difficult for Tom.

3. We hurried to reach the airport, but we missed the plane anyway.

4. I want to go to a circus.

5. In the afternoon, I like to go for walks in the park.

6. He slammed on his breaks when he saw the naked girl standing on the corner.

7. Some of the boys ride the bus while others ride their bikes.

8. I eat at the store where I work and so does Joe.

9. The neighbors, in spite of our friendship, objected.

10. I did not apply because the job was in New Jersey.

11. Give him the sandwich.

12. He fell out of the hammock in his backyard.

13. Having aced the midterm, he didn't bother studying for the final.

15. Hoping to graduate a semester early, Aaron took 20 credits both semesters.

16. Because the owner was moving, we were able to purchase the Bentley for a greatly reduced price.

17. She hurried into the crowded restaurant, hoping to lose the man following her.

18. Without thinking of his safety, Drew jumped across the ravine to rescue the small dog.

19. Underneath his gruff exterior, Mac had a soft heart for all people.

20. Deb needed to complete her project by Thursday in order to visit her family on Friday and she wasn't sure she would make the deadline.

Precision Worksheet

1. Not a year has (went, gone) by without fires in the Everglades.

2. Today most of the fires that (occur, occurs) in the Everglades are set by man.

3. Fires of this type (is, are) necessary to burn away the old growth and make room for the young grass.

4. Last year the Everglades (saw, seen) about five hundred fires.

5. Only nine of the five hundred (was, were) caused by lightening.

6. One (who, whom) has seen the results of a large fire in the Everglades knows what devastation is possible.

7. I can't decide (weather, whether) to take a plane or a bus to New York.

8. Let me know when (your, you're) ready to go to the library.

9. To get to the reading room, you have to go (past, passed) the main desk.

10. The canals he has built (prevent, prevents) flooding, but they also drain the area of water needed during droughts.

11. If you have read <u>Winnie the Pooh</u>, you might (have, of) heard of Piglet.

12. (There, Their, They're) are several good reasons to take that course first.

13. Tim accidentally picked up (Jim's, Jims) book after class.

14. Jerry went to the grocery store and Tom went (to, too, two).

15. Did you find out when (there, they're, their) supposed to serve dinner?

16. We are (suppose, supposed) to be prepared by Wednesday.

17. Poaching and lack of water (account, accounts) for the severe loss of both fish and alligators.

18. (Whoever, Whomever) visits the park realizes what a beautiful addition it is to the community.

19. Tell Jean (its, it's) time to leave for class.

20. Irene likes spending her vacations at the beach better (then, than) in the mountains.

21. I don't know how the weather will (affect, effect) my vacation plans.

Grandfather's Gift

by Lenny Applefeld

How well I remember my first pair of roller skates. I was in Kindergarten, and we were informed through the newsletter that there would be rollerskating each Tuesday after school. Since I was enrolled in the morning kindergarten class, my grandfather drove me to school, and he told me he would stay with me to guide me as I skated.

Did I need assistance? Each time I picked up one foot, down I went. Two fifth graders came over to help me up.

"Lenny, you will never learn to skate by skating once a week. Tomorrow I am buying you a pair of roller skates," grandfather said, as we drove home.

Grandfather kept his promise. After school we went to Sears to purchase a pair of roller skates. We walked for a while until we saw the sporting goods department. Grandfather found a pair of blue roller skates that he thought would fit me. First he made me stand on one foot to see if I would be able to skate with them on. We decided to buy them.

So each day when I returned from school, I practiced skating for hours. I learned to control my skates on the family room rug. My skating improved.

The second time I attended roller skating, I really was rolling. I only recall a few falls.

Grandfather was supportive and helped me in many ways. He explained how to make my turns and instructed me in skating backwards. By the third week, I was skating with enough skill to participate in every competition. My favorite challenge was the Limbo. I become the Limbo star of Fifth District School.

At the end of the season, nine other people and I were selected to compete in the county-wide Limbo competition. I was overjoyed. For the first time in my life, I was recognized for an accomplishment of my own. To be praised by my own peers is one thing, but to be chosen to represent the entire northeast area was truly a great honor. I couldn't have been more happy if I had won the Cy Young Award.

Mrs. Davidson, our recreation supervisor, forwarned me that I would be up against real pros.

"Mrs. Davidson knows a winner when she sees one," gratherfather commented. His pride and joy was obvious. Grandfather's eyes looked misty, as he smiled warmly and patted my head.

The big day arrived. After school, we drove up to a school in east Baltimore for the competition. I walked into the school and signed in. I put on my roller skates and warmed up.

They called for my category. I hesitated a little, and then skated over to get in line. I was under the pole with no problem at all. The second time I went under the pole, my head hit it. I thought it was all over, but luckily, they gave me another chance. I made it! Again I hit the pole, and then made it, hit the pole again, and made it. The last time I went under the pole, I missed, and I was moved to third place. Then our trophies were given out. On the loud speaker, I heard "Lenny Applefeld, third place." I went up and received my trophy, but something was wrong; the figure was a girl, but that didn't matter. I was so happy when I came home, I could have burst.

I shall always remember that first pair of rollerskates and the time, interest, and devotion my grandfather showed to develop my skating skills.

Needless to say, grandfather was thrilled and brimming over with happiness. He was at a loss for words, too emotional to speak. His strong arms encircled me and that said it all. It was then I realized making grandfather proud was the most important result of winning the Limbro contest. We had worked hard to win, and now we could share the joy of victory. I shall always cherish grandfather's gift.

Brian Elieson

February 26, 1984

An Experience I'll Never Forget

My first experience riding horses was a memorable one. Because I enjoyed riding, my parents decided to send me to a horse camp for two weeks. It was a fun/scary experience for me and I think other people can benefit from it.

The Sunday before the camp was going to start, my parents and I went to visit the camp and get information about it. After we looked around, we decided that I would start the following day. I was thrilled about the camp and could not wait to start.

At the beginning of the day, everyone at the camp, including the teacher, would get the horses from the field. I would be given Princess to ride. I did not like that horse because she would refuse to move. The most Princess would take was about ten steps.

After our riding lesson, we would learn something about taking care of horses. Some of the things we learned to do were putting the bridal on, wrapping the horse's legs, and how to brush them. I was the smallest one in the group and I had a hard time putting on the bridal because it was difficult for me to reach. It was embarrassing since everyone else could do it with no trouble. Learning how to take care of horses was fun and interesting.

The best part comes next, lunch. Usually everyone would go down to the stream to eat. Some days we would eat in the stable building because we liked to watch the Summer Olympics on

television.

After lunch, we had another riding lesson. We would practice what we learned in the morning, such as riding bareback. This part of the day I got to ride Fuzzy, who I thought was a nice horse. He knew the course and I did not have to pull the reins right and left to make Fuzzy turn all the time. He was gentle and when he trotted over the sticks it was a smooth ride.

My first two days were a lot of fun. The third day was a traumatic one for me. We went out into the field to get the horses and walk them back to the riding area. I was holding Princess' bridal as I came to the stream. In order to get across the stream, you had to jump. As I was about to jump, I tripped and fell into the stream. Unfortunately, I didn't know to let go of the bridal. Princess jumped with me, and stepped on my back and behind my ear. As she stepped on my back, it pushed my stomach against a rock. She got away and ran to the teacher, who was standing nearby. While I was lying in the stream, out of the corner of my eye I saw a big horse leaping over me. I was SCARED TO DEATH! My mind went blank. At that moment, I didn't want to come near a horse again. All I wanted to do was to go home, but I didn't. The remainder of the day turned out to be good. The teacher got me to ride because she said if I didn't, I probably would never get on a horse again.

I didn't finish the rest of the two weeks. My parents decided to take me out. The teacher did not tell my mother about the incident when she came to pick me up. It was by accident that my mother found out from another child. That evening my mother

took me to GBMC hospital. When the doctor said there was nothing wrong, I felt relieved. I was lucky that nothing serious happened.

The next day, my father called the camp and found out some other things that they did not tell us when we visited. We were not told how much the children were left on their own, which was quite a lot. Also, it was not clear about the persons who would be assisting with supervision, it turned out to be young girls about twelve years old. They did not tell us that all the horses were not fully broken. Some of the horses in the field were a little wild. They were in the field running loose when the children would go to get horses to ride. Because of these things, my father cancelled the rest of the camp. At that time, I was glad but now I feel I would like to take riding lessons again. I enjoy riding; but the next time I take lessons, my parents will check out the stables more carefully. It is an experience that taught everyone in my family a lesson.

What More Could I Ask For? > title is very appropriate and invites the reader to investigate what the "wish" is.

By Jessica Greif

I remember one day, about a month or two ago, I had my best friend sleep over. Her name is Kristen Binck. We've known each other for four years. Anyway, it was about 10:00 p.m., when my parents asked me to come into the laundry room for a second. Just a moment later, my dream came true. > Doing laundry is a dream come true

For as long as I can remember, I have loved acting, singing, and dancing very, very much. It says in my baby book: Dancing to "Chorus Line"- 16 months. It also lists half a dozen songs I sang at 22 months. It even says: "Loves singing, dancing, and musicals." They got that right. I'd been going to musicals since I was five, and I didn't intend to stop!

You danced to "A Chorus Line" for 16 months Amazing

Which ones in particular? Be specific

Ever since I was eight, I had wanted to be an actress. Well, I sure had been in enough shows! In "Annie Get Your Gun", I'd been Annie's little sister, and I played Oliver in "Oliver". I'd been in the chorus of three other shows. Kristen and I had made up at least seven shows. All I wanted to do is be on Broadway, on TV, or even in the movies!

You played Oliver North?

Well, I played Tevye in "Fiddler on the Roof"!

So there I was, standing in the laundry room, with my mom and dad. The door was closed, so Kristen couldn't hear what we were saying. Then my dad started explaining that that afternoon he'd gotten a phone call from a company called "Calling All Kids". They were people who found kids that were actors and actresses. I started to smile. Then Dad said that they wanted to know if I would like to audition for a movie

What pronoun should you substitute?

wonderful detail

This is more telling than showing

yes. That moment was the happiest moment of my entire life. I ran out of the room, and told a very anxious Kristen the same story that my dad had just told me. During the entire night, she kept saying, "You're so lucky!".

Jessica Greif

The next day, I got dressed in one of my favorite outfits. Since I was supposed to bring a stuffed animal with me to the audition, I found a big stuffed koala that my brother and I had loved since I was about three. I also found a nice red ribbon, and tied it around the koala's neck. About ten minutes later, Dad and I said good-bye to my mom and Kristen. Then we set off for Washington D.C.

What happened to Betsy?

When we got to Central Casting, we walked up some stairs, and into a room with about five other girls in it. After I signed in, a woman came in and gave me a script. She told me to study a certain part. After a while, I was told to go into the adjacent room with a woman named Carol. We went over my part a few times and then she told that if I got called back before Wednesday, I should come back on Wednesday. She also told me to try to memorize the whole script. (It was only a small part of it.)

You could elaborate on the part you wanted to play

What does the "it" refer to?

↓ Do you mean your part?

Well, they called back, and I came back. This time I was with a woman named Tina. I think she was the director. We went over the script and she asked me a few questions. Well, I didn't get called back, and I didn't get the part. But it was definitely the most terrific experience I've ever had.

This is a terrible disappointment

Jessica,

What a disappointment. I was hoping the ending would be more celebratory, but that's life in show biz. You have an appealing tone here, and your use of specific details and descriptive words adds to the effect. I enjoyed reading about your rise to stardom.

'76

Joe

What More Could I Ask For? (Revision)

By Jessica Greif

One day, about a month or two ago, I had my best friend sleep over. Her name is Kristen Binck. It was about 10:00 p.m., when my parents asked me to come into the laundry room for a second. Just a moment later, my dream came true.

For as long as I can remember, I have adored acting, singing, and dancing very, very much. It says in my baby book: Dancing to "Chorus Line"- 16 months. It also lists half a dozen songs I sang at 22 months. It even says: "Loves singing, dancing, and musicals." They got that right. I'd been going to musicals since I was five, and I didn't intend to stop! Some of my favorites were (and still are) "Oklahoma," and "South Pacific."

Ever since I was eight, I had wanted to be an actress. Well, I certainly had been in enough shows! In "Annie Get Your Gun," I'd been Annie's little sister, and I played Oliver in "Oliver". I'd been in the chorus of three other shows. Kristen and I had made up at least seven shows. All I wanted to do is be on Broadway, on TV, or even in the movies!

So there I was, standing in the laundry room, with my mom and dad. The door was closed, so Kristen couldn't hear what we were saying. Then my dad started explaining that that afternoon he'd gotten a phone call from a company called "Calling All Kids." They were people who found kids who were actors and actresses. I started to smile. Then Dad said that they wanted to know if I would like to audition for a movie the next day. I was almost trembling. I just managed to say yes. I had to keep myself from bursting with happiness. I ran out of the room, and told a very anxious Kristen the same story that my dad had just told me. During the entire night, she kept saying, "Your're so lucky!"

The next day, I got dressed in one of my favorite outfits. Since I was supposed to bring a stuffed animal with me to the audition, I found a big stuffed koala that my brother and I had loved since I was about three. I also found a nice red ribbon, and tied it around the koala's neck. About ten minutes later, Dad and I said good-bye to my mom and Kristen. Then we set off for Washington D.C.

When we got to Central Casting, we walked up some stairs, and into a room with about five other girls in it. After I signed in, a woman came in and gave me a script. She told me to study the part of Phoebe, the main character. After a while, I was told to go into the adjacent room with a woman named Carol. We went over my part a few times and then she told me that if I got called back before Wednesday, I should come back on Wednesday. She also told me to try to memorize the whole script. (We were only given a part of the script, but the part we were given was

stapled, so to us, it was the whole script).

Well, I got called back, and I came back. This time I was with a woman named Tina. I think she was the director. We went over the script and she asked me a few questions. Well, I didn't get called back, and I didn't get the part. But it was definitely the most terrific experience I've ever had.

My Half-Sister Sam

This title makes me want to read on!

Some friends just come and go but not Samantha. [(Sam for short) I've known Samantha for six years, and in those years, we've ~~gone through almost everything~~ done a lot together. New camps, new friends, gymnastics, a step-mom--you name it, we did it. Together. she's my lifelong friend.

Samantha and I aren't even related in any way. ~~So~~ Why do I call her my half sister? [We are almost exactly alike, looks and personality wise.] We both love clothes, have mothers whose first name is Jo Ann, have the same exact teeth structure, have a mole on the same spot on our back, love gymnastics, and both love animals.

Same 4

[We met in 1981 on a bus going to Circle D Farm day camp.

I was already on the bus when Sam got on.

"Hi," she said, "is anyone sitting with you?"

I shook my head no. At that time I was very shy, I could tell she wasn't.

Great details here

"Good," she stated ~~loudly.~~ quietly "Could I sit with you."

"Yes," I said very softly. She plopped down on the seat, and the bus took off.

"So what's your name. Mine's Sam. Sam is short for Samantha. Samantha Vanghel.

"Mine is Shannon Spencer?" I said much more confident and sure of myself.

After that, our conversation drifted along smoothly, and the bus ride went by fast.

[When we got ther she said,] "This is my second year here, and I can tell it's your first, so I'll show you around."

"That sounds great!" I answered. I was really beginning to like her.

The day was superb. [I really got to know the place and feel at home. [I also met a lot of other friends like Irene Mack, her sister Michelle Mack, Kristen Carr, and the camp owner's daughter, Kate Dowd.]

Since that day, we've all gone year after year and enjoyed many good times, but not as many as with Sam. [Sam has been really good to me in many ways, and (I hope) I've been good to her. We've helped each other through good times and bad. That's what best friends are for, right?]

Your instinct is a good one, but I'm not sure if this is the most effective way to conclude.

C-49 '79

Shannon -

I think you have an excellent topic for an essay here, and in the body of the essay where you have really developed with details, the writing is some of the most effective that you've done.

The essay would be even more effective, I think, if you worked on expanding the opening paragraphs, the section on the activities at camp, and the concluding paragraph. I want to see and hear more of Sam because you're really gotten me interested. Could you possibly end the essay with some images of you and Sam together? Or a description of Sam as you always think of her? That might be the best way to leave your reader with a vivid, memorable, mental picture.

A good effort!
Your writing gets better and better -

Kim

80.

My Half-Sister Sam (Revision)

By Shannon Spencer

Some friends just come and go but not Samantha, Sam for short. I've known Samantha for six years, and in those years we've gone through a lot of different experiences. New camps, new friends, gymnastics, a stepmom - you name it, we did it, together. She's my lifelong friend.

Samantha and I aren't even related. Why do I call her my half sister? We are almost exactly alike, looks and personality wise. We both have blonde shoulder length hair, blue eyes, and are 4'8". We both love clothes, shopping, gymnastics, and movies.

I remember, after we had met, we found that we had both been enrolled in the same gymnastics class. We were both delighted and surprised! That's how we noticed we both wanted to pursue gymnastics.

Now, you're probably wondering how we met. We met in 1981 on a crowded bus going to Circle D Farm Day Camp. I was already on the bus when Sam got on.

"Hello," she said, " is anyone sitting with you?"

I shook my head no. At that time I was very shy. I could tell she wasn't.

"Good," she stated loudly. "Could I sit with you?"

"Yes," I said very quietly. She plopped down onto the seat, and the bus took off.

"So what's your name? Mine's Sam. Sam is short for Samantha, Samantha Vanghel," she said, hopeful to start a conversation.

"Mine is Shannon Spencer," I said, much more confident and sure of myself.

After that, our conversation drifted along smoothly. Sam had succeeded in starting a good conversation, and the bus ride went by really fast.

"This is my second year here, and I can tell it's your first, so I'll show you around," Sam said as soon as we got off the bus.

"That sounds great!" I answered. I was really beginning to like her!

It was a superb day! She showed me everything there was to see. The houses and their stables, the tennis courts, the pond, and even her secret place to eat lunch. All the kids and counselors

July 20, 198-

My Bugged-Out Sister

My name is Brian. I'm Jenny Lee's brother. Since we are, unfortunately, "blood and flesh", I know Jenny rightly well. (word choice?)

When I was born, Jenny was already three years old. She loved holding me and making funny noises. I know I was a baby too cute to resist, but I sure got tired listening to Jenny ask my mom [all day] if she could hold me.

Now I'm too big to hold, so instead, she comes and hugs me. She pretends to be all nice and sweet and everything, but I know a whole lot better. 'Cause right after the sweet act, she asks for some candy. I'm smart & always turn her down. Yesterday was probably the millionth time. Boy, some people just never learn!!

Then, she's always squeaking on that violin. Itzak Perlman, she's not.

an interesting way to open

good details! include more physical details of what you see?

[all day] - cut - implied ?

Could you show this scene with details ?

comma splice

(I think you are creating his voice here, but try not to overuse exclamation points.)

witty details

transition from previous paragraph?

True, she was the only one who scored a touchdown in football, and I'm the one who let her get pass. But that's because she runs faster. You just wait. Pretty soon, I'll be able to tackle her (down) - cut

~~Okay, so~~ Maybe she did come in first, second, or third in everything she did in Field Day. So what if I only get a few awards? I'm three whole years younger than her!!

Let me tell you another thing. She tattletales on almost everything I do. She says I tattletale, but come on! Don't you believe a thing she says.

Did you notice all I've been saying are negative things? Well, that's because most of her is negative, but I have to admit, there are some things I'm thankful for. She helps me practice for my soccer. She helps me on the piano. And all in all, I'm pretty glad she's my sister. Surprised?

What game?

Where?

specific transition?

For instance

This conclusion comes on pretty sudden and doesn't seem quite clear.

World dialogue work best here?

Jenny -

You picked an excellent voice to write in! It's always fun to imagine what one brother or sister will say about another. I wonder, though, if in places you made the tone a little too conversational?

You have some great opportunities in this essay to relay some specific anecdotes about your brother's experiences with and perceptions of you, but you as it is, you do stay pretty general. Could you concentrate the body of the essay on two or three ex's and really develop them with detail!

Your grammar, sentence, and paragraph structure have really improved. Your writing skills are getting stronger and stronger.

An excellent effort -

Kim

My Bugged-Out Sister (Revision)

By Jenny Lee

"Hi, Brian! How are you doing? I'm doing just fine. How's your day been going? Did you have a fun time at Soccer Camp, Brian?" Oh, no. Here it comes again. The candy act. Oh, hi there! I'm Brian and that's my sister Jenny Lee. I know for a fact that after Jenny is all sweet and nice to me she asks me for a piece of candy. Watch.

"Brian, I was wondering. I'm kind of low an candy right now. Do you think you could spare a piece?"

"No!" I scream. Jenny never learns. When I was born, Jenny was already three years old. She loved holding me and making stupid noises. I know I was a baby too cute to resist, but I sure got tired of listening to her ask my mom if she could hold me.

Also, she's always squeaking on that violin.

"Shut up!" I yell. But does she listen? No, she just keeps on playing the dumb minuet.

So what if she gets first, second, third in everything she did on Field Day! Maybe I did only get a few awards. I'm three years younger than her.

Another thing about her is that she tattletales. She tattletales on everything I do. Listen.

"Mom, Brian just kicked me. It hurts bad, too." See what I mean? Then she says I tattletale, but don't believe her.

There are some things I am thankful for her about. Like, she'll help me on my piano lessons and my soccer. She'll also drill me on my multiplication facts. "What's 8 x 6?" "Um...48?" "Right! Let's do another one."

See, after all I guess I could be pretty glad about her being my sister. So maybe I will give her a piece of my candy. But, then again, maybe I won't!

Appendix D

Sample Final Course Evaluations

Dear _____

Congratulations on successfully completing the Basics of Writing! Throughout the course you were an active, enthusiastic participant in class discussions and activities. You carefully completed home assignments and classwork, diligently working to apply new skills and concepts to your own writing. During writing workshop, you were both constructive and diplomatic, often able to perceive strengths and weaknesses in others' work.

As the course progressed, your writing progressed, as well. Your creativity, ability to choose engaging topics, sense of organization and development, and understanding of the need for details and examples are among your most outstanding strengths as a writer. You should continue to practice complicating and varying sentence structure, distinguishing between necessary and unnecessary details, and pacing and organizing the elements of an essay for maximum effectiveness. You are also ready to undertake some of the more sophisticated aspects of style: developing an original, authentic voice, manipulating word choice and tone, and practicing the inclusion of figurative language.

In the future, you might want to pursue an intermediate level expository or creative writing course, such as Writing Skills I or II, in the CTY older students programs, but I think you might also enjoy and benefit from other accelerated courses, such as those offered by the Young Students Program. Latin is a course which would allow you to explore a new language, while also sharpening your grammar and mechanics.

Regardless of what coursework you choose to pursue, I am certain that you will continue to enjoy academic success and growth. Your enthusiasm for learning, self-discipline, and conscientious attitude make you an outstanding example for your peers. It was a pleasure to have you in my class. Good luck and best wishes.

Keep Writing!

Dear _____

Congratulations on successfully completing the Basics of Writing. Throughout the course, you were an enthusiastic participant in classroom discussions and activities. You completed home assignments conscientiously, worked energetically on writing tasks, and performed especially well in the thinking games we played.

Your writing steadily improved. Your abilities to choose engaging topics for essays, to invest topics with emotion and personal significance, to organize supporting points around a specific focus, and to use examples which illustrate your supporting points are among your most outstanding strengths as a student of writing. You need to continue working on refining your writing skills, maintaining the same quality of effort throughout each writing task, both in terms of content and structure. Specifically, work on developing your writing with greater detail, avoiding cliches or platitudes, and creating a unified tone and voice in each piece. Continue practicing effective mechanical skills as well, such as sentence structure and variety.

You are ready to move on to more sophisticated writing classes, but in the future, you will need to work even harder on your self-motivation and self-discipline. At times, talkative and disruptive behavior in class kept you from performing at your maximum. Working with, rather than against, your classmates and instructors can only help you gain more from your academic pursuits.

Good luck with your writing, and with your many other academic pursuits. It was a pleasure having you in the class.

Sincerely,

_____